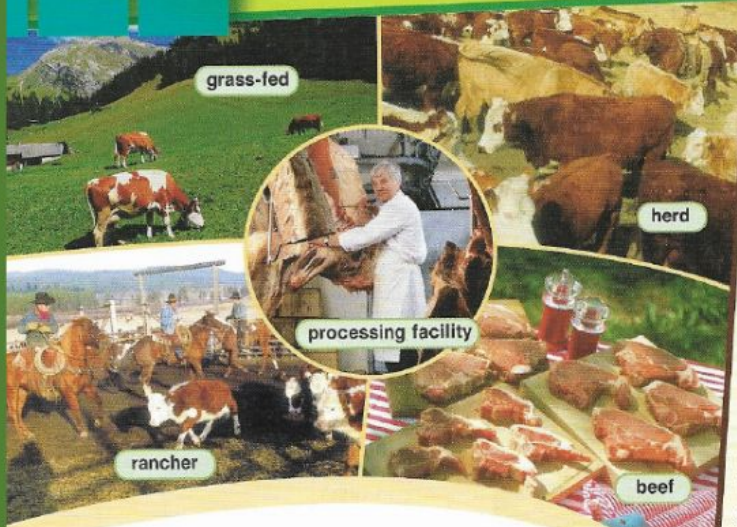


1 Beef industry



Cattle Farmer Monthly June



Is raising grass-fed cattle the way to go?

Marvin Harris

Grass-fed beef is in high demand. Many consumers say it tastes better than grain-fed beef. And they're willing to pay more for it.

The down side of grass-fed beef is the cost. Grasses have a lower **feed conversion efficiency** than corn or soy. Cattle in pastures are also less likely to receive **growth hormones**. Thus, it takes longer for them to gain mass than their corn or soy fed counterparts. Furthermore, they do not receive **antibiotics** and can get sick more easily. Finally, corn-fed **herds** often produce higher **grades** of beef.

However, there are methods to counteract those shortcomings. Some grass-fed cattle forage in pastures for the first few years of life. Before shipping them to a **processing facility**, **ranchers** send them to a feedlot for **grain finishing**. For approximately six months they receive special **feed rations** to bring them up to **market weight** rapidly.

Get ready!

- 1 Before you read the passage, talk about these questions.

- How important is the beef industry in your country?
- What type of meat is most popular in your country?

Reading

- 2 Read the magazine article. Then, mark the following statements as true (T) or false (F).

- Soy-fed cattle grow faster than grass-fed cattle.
- Grass-fed herds produce higher grade beef.
- Grass-fed cattle do not eat in feedlots.

- 4 Fill in the blanks with the correct words and phrases from the word bank.

word BANK

growth hormones
feedlot antibiotics herd
market weight beef

Vocabulary

- 3 Match the words (1-8) with the definitions (A-H).

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 — rancher | 5 — feed ration |
| 2 — grass-fed | 6 — processing facility |
| 3 — grade | 7 — grain finishing |
| 4 — cattle | 8 — feed conversion efficiency |

- A a selected amount of food given to an animal
B a place where animals are butchered
C cows and bulls
D a rating of the quality of beef
E a measurement of how animals convert feed into mass
F primarily eating grass from a pasture
G a farmer who raises livestock
H feeding cattle grain to raise weight before slaughter

- The cattle in the _____ are bigger than those in the pasture.
- _____ is one of the most popular sources of food for humans.
- Grass-fed cattle take longer to achieve _____.
- Most cattle receive _____ to keep them free of disease.
- _____ help cattle grow more quickly.
- Disease can spread very quickly through a _____ of cows.

Listening

6  Listen to a conversation between a rancher and her assistant. Choose the correct answers.

- 1 What is the conversation mainly about?
 - A a drop in beef prices
 - B a mistake with antibiotics
 - C an increase in cattle weight
 - D a change in cattle raising methods
- 2 Why does the man oppose the woman's suggestions?
 - A The ranch could lose money.
 - B The grass-fed trend is ending.
 - C The cattle don't need antibiotics.
 - D The cattle won't reach market weight.

7  Listen again and complete the conversation.

Assistant: Are you suggesting we switch to
1 _____ - _____ ?

Rancher: I'm thinking about it.

Assistant: I don't think that's a good idea. The
cattle will 2 _____ to
reach market weight.

Rancher: I understand that. It'll take longer and it'll
cost more.

Assistant: I hope you'll 3 _____ .

Rancher: Well, 4 _____
_____. I'd like to stop giving them
antibiotics and growth hormones, as well.

Assistant: That could be a 5 _____
_____. We could lose a lot of
money on sick and small cows.

Rancher: I 6 _____ . But
we can also charge a lot
more for grass-fed,
hormone-free beef.

